

# Nutrition

## fact sheet



**T**he food and physical activity choices made today – and everyday – affect your health and how you feel today and in the future. Eating right and being physically active are keys to a healthy lifestyle. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005, can lead the way to a healthier you.

## Step Up to Nutrition and Health

Here's how:

*Make smart choices from every food group.* Give your body the balanced nutrition it needs by eating a variety of nutrient-packed foods every day. Just be sure to stay within your daily calorie needs.

A healthy eating plan:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts.
- Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium) and added sugars.

*Get the most nutrition out of your calories.* Choose the most nutritionally rich foods you can from each food group each day—those packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients but lower in calories.

- Focus on fruits. Eat a variety of fruits—fresh, frozen, canned or dried. For a 2,000 calorie diet, you need 2 cups

of fruit each day.

- Vary your veggies. Eat more orange and dark green vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes, broccoli and dark leafy greens. Include beans and peas such as pinto beans, kidney beans, split peas and lentils more often.
- Get your calcium-rich foods. Get 3 cups of low-fat or fat-free milk—or an equivalent amount of low-fat yogurt and/or low-fat cheese every day. (1½ ounces of cheese equals 1 cup of milk) If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free milk products and/or calcium-fortified foods and beverages.
- Make half your grains whole. Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice or pasta every day. Look to see that grains such as wheat, rice, oats, or corn are referred to as “whole” in the list of ingredients.
- Go lean with protein. Choose lean meats and poultry. Bake it, broil it or grill it. And vary your protein choices with more fish, beans, peas, nuts



# Information

American Dietetic  
Association  
Knowledge Center

For food and  
nutrition information  
or for a referral to a  
nutrition professional  
in your area call:

800/366-1655

or visit:

[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)



Your link to nutrition and health<sup>sm</sup>  
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and seeds.

- Know the limits on fats, salt and sugars. Read the Nutrition Facts label on foods. Look for foods low in saturated fats and trans fats. Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little salt (sodium) and/or added sugars.

*Find your balance between food and physical activity.* Regular physical activity is important for your overall health and fitness—plus it helps control body weight, promotes a feeling of well-being and reduces the risk of chronic diseases.

- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- For even greater health benefits and to help control body weight, be physically active for about 60 minutes a day.
- Children and teenagers should be physically active for 60 minutes every day, or most days.

## Consider this:

If you eat 100 more food calories a day than you burn, you'll gain about 1 pound in a month. That's about 10 pounds in a year. The bottom line is that to lose weight, it's important to reduce calories and increase physical activity.

*Play it safe with foods.* Prepare, handle and store food properly to keep you and your family safe.

- Clean hands, food-contact surfaces, fruits and vegetables. To avoid spreading bacteria to other foods, meat and poultry should not be washed or rinsed.
- Separate raw, cooked and ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing or storing.
- Cook meat, poultry and fish to safe internal temperatures to kill microorganisms.
- Chill perishable foods promptly and thaw foods properly.

## For more information about:

- The food groups and nutrition values or to pick up some new ideas on physical activity, go to [www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines).
- MyPyramid food guidance system, including a quick estimate of what and how much you need to eat, go to [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).
- Home food safety, go to [www.homefoodsafety.org](http://www.homefoodsafety.org).
- How to find a nutrition professional in your area, go to [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).

Source: *Finding Your Way to a Healthier You*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U. S. Department of Agriculture.